

Holter Hydroelectric Facility,  
Mechanic's Garage  
(Holter Hydroelectric Facility, Building No. 48)  
1250 feet west of Powerhouse  
Wolf Creek Vicinity  
Lewis and Clark County  
Montana

HAER No. MT-94-F

HAER  
MONT  
25-WOCRE  
1F-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
Rocky Mountain System Support Office  
National Park Service  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HOLTER HYDROELECTRIC FACILITY,  
MECHANIC'S GARAGE  
(HOLTER HYDROELECTRIC FACILITY, BUILDING NO. 48)

HAER  
MONT  
25-WOCRE  
1F-

HAER No. MT-94-F

I. INTRODUCTION

Location: The Mechanic's Garage (Building No. 48) is located within the Holter Hydroelectric Facility Historic District near the small community of Wolf Creek in Lewis and Clark County, Montana. It stands approximately 1250 feet west of the Powerhouse, and is one of three historic garages grouped at the southeast end of the operators' camp for the facility.

Quad: Sheep Creek

UTM: Zone 12; Easting 423150; Northing 5204440

Date of Construction: c. 1926

Present The Montana Power Company  
40 E. Broadway  
Butte, Montana 59701

Present Use: Maintenance garage and storage

Significance: The Holter Hydroelectric Facility Historic District is significant as one of the most intact hydroelectric generating plants and operators' camps on the Missouri-Madison Project. The Mechanic's Garage contributes to the significance of the district as an example of a support facility constructed by The Montana Power Company at its isolated hydroelectric power plants. It also is representative of the design concepts of the period.

Historian: Mary McCormick  
Renewable Technologies, Inc.  
Butte, Montana  
January 1998

## II. HISTORY

The Mechanic's Garage (Building No. 48) is associated with a fairly massive program by The Montana Power Company to upgrade facilities at its remote hydroelectric plants during the 1920s and 1930s. It was constructed around 1926 as a maintenance and repair garage for vehicles and other project machinery at Holter. A wash station appears to have been provided in the garage at this time.<sup>1</sup>

The Mechanic's Garage has sustained a few modifications since construction. By 1940, the wash station was no longer intact.<sup>2</sup> Later, in the late 1960s, a small historic shed was moved behind the garage and attached to the south wall.<sup>3</sup>

## III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Mechanic's Garage (Building No. 48) is one of three historic support buildings grouped around a common driveway on a small rise at the southeast end of the operators' camp at Holter (Figure 1). It stands on the west side of the drive, while the 4-Car Garage (MT-94-G) is on the south side of the drive and the 3-Car Garage (MT-94-H) on the east. Rolling foothills rise behind (south) the garage complex.

The Mechanic's Garage is a vernacular building, typically in design and detail to its period of construction. The 31'4" (east-west) by 53'5" (north-south) building is topped by a hipped roof and rests over a low concrete basement (Figure 2). The lower half of the building is enclosed by concrete walls except for a narrow wing at the south end. The upper walls are of wood-frame construction, and clad on the exterior by drop siding with a 5" exposure. Walls of the wing are also formed by wood framing, and have drop siding on the upper half and clapboard siding on the lower half. Three-and-one-half inch cornerboards trim the wall corners, and 10" frieze boards delineate the wall juncture with the roof. The concrete walls at the basement slightly project and are beveled at the upper edge, creating a water table.

The hipped roof of the garage has a moderate pitch. Board decking covers the truss system. It is sheathed by interlocking asphalt shingles over two layers of wood shingles. The roof eaves are open and have a wide overhang underscored by false rafter tails.

A large garage opening is centered on the front (east) of the garage. It holds a sliding door suspended on a metal runner. The door is a recent replacement constructed of plywood.

A person-sized entry is evident in the concrete wall on the west side of the garage. It presumably provided access into the basement at one time, but has been infilled with concrete.

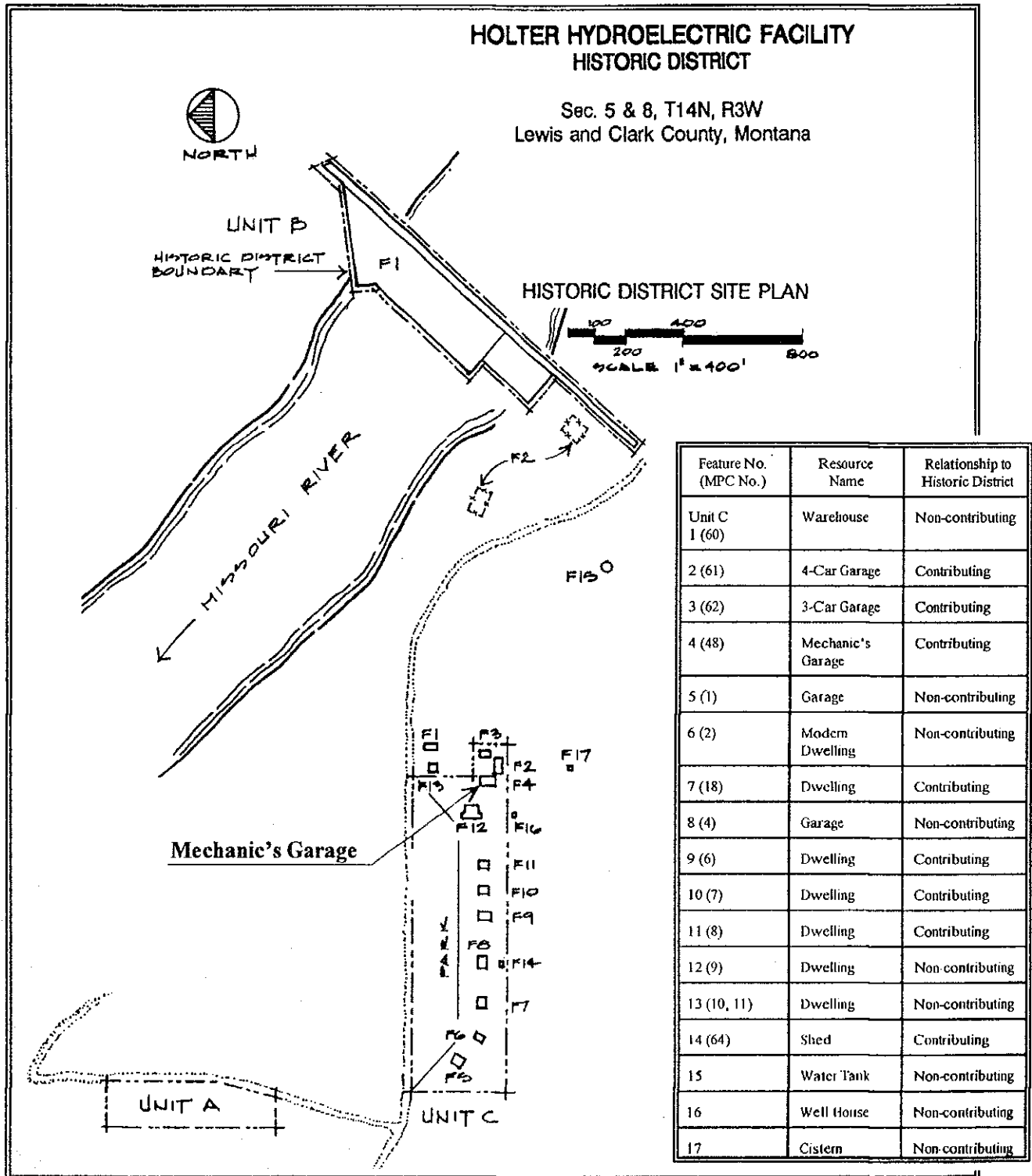


Figure 1. Holter Hydroelectric Facility Historic District.

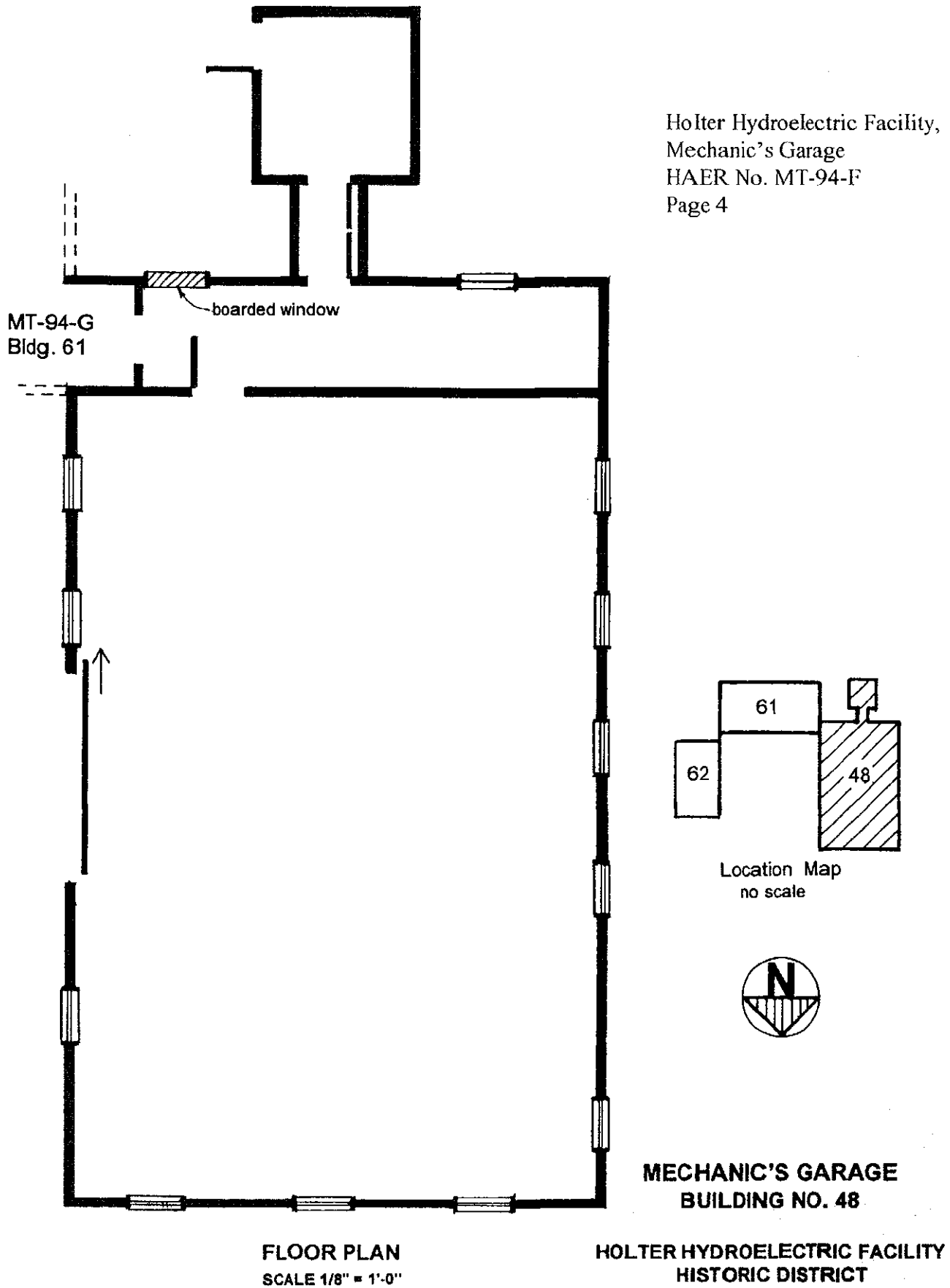


Figure 2. Mechanic's Garage (Building No. 48) Floor Plan.

Windows on the front (east), north, and west sides of the garage are small, square fixed units with a 2x3 light configuration. On the south wall there are two, wood-sash double-hung windows with six-over-six lights; one of these units has been covered by boards. All of the window openings have square-edge surrounds with a beveled drip hood.

At the north end of the front wall there is an opening that provides egress for a fire hose housed in the garage. This opening is the same size as the fixed windows, and has the same finishing treatment. However, it has a board cover hinged on the bottom so that it opens out from the top.

The interior of the garage proper is a large open room (see Figure 2). The lower half of the walls are exposed concrete, including the interior wall between the garage and the south wing. Corrugated metal covers the upper half of the walls. A concrete work bench is integral with the west wall and spans the length of the room. It stands approximately 3' above floor level and is 1' ½"-wide at the bench. At the north half of the room, the concrete floor slightly slopes towards two drains at the center; both of these drains have been permanently plugged. Corrugated metal sheeting covers the ceiling. Eight light fixtures aligned in three rows are suspended from the ceiling. Each of them has a single bulb in a porcelain socket. An electric heater also hangs from the ceiling at the southwest corner of the room, while a coiled hose is suspended in front of the fire hose opening at the northeast corner.

The south wing of the garage is under the main roof. It currently serves as a "linesmen's shack," where electric transmission equipment and supplies are stored. The interior wall between the wing and the main part of the garage is concrete on the lower half; roofing felt covers the upper half. Remaining walls have exposed studs but are lined by cabinets that hold insulator, wire, bolts and other supplies. The floor of the shack is concrete, and 12" boards cover the ceiling. A small closet at the east end of the shack contains coiled wire.

The basement of the garage is no longer assessable due to the closure of the entry in the west wall. It presumably was more of a crawl space than an actual basement, and likely housed water pipes.

The historic shed on the south side is connected to the garage by a narrow, gable-roofed enclosure. It is a small, shed roofed building set on a concrete foundation. Drop siding covers the exterior walls, and 4" boards frame the wall corners. The roof has board decking covered by rolled roofing material. Access to and from the outside is provided by a paneled-wood door on the east side. The enclosure between the shed and garage has horizontal board siding, and is without openings.

#### IV. FUTURE OF THE PROPERTY

The Montana Power Company plans to demolish the Mechanic's Garage at the Holter Hydroelectric Facility (FERC Project No. 2188). The company has sponsored recording the building to the standards of the Historic American Engineering Record.

#### V. ENDNOTES

1. Montana Power Company, "Insurance Map of Holter Montana Year 1920," 1921, revised to April 5, 1940, Drawing No. 22568-C, sheet 3 on file at The Montana Power Company, Hydro Engineering, Butte; Montana Power Company, "Reclassification of Electric Plant, January 1, 1937," vol. 1., unpublished report on file at The Montana Power Company, Property Accounting Butte. Montana Power Company, "Structures and Improvements," April 1940, unpublished report on file at The Montana Power Company, Property Accounting, Butte.

2. Montana Power Company, "Structures and Improvements," April 1940.

3. Renewable Technologies, Inc., "Holter Hydroelectric Facility," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1991.

#### VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Montana Power Company, "Insurance Map of Holter Montana, Year 1920." 1921, revised to April 5, 1940. Drawing No. 22568-D, sheet 3 on file at The Montana Power Company, Hydro Engineering, Butte.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Reclassification of Electric Plant, January 1, 1937." Vol. 1. Unpublished report on file at The Montana Power Company, Property Accounting, Butte.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Structures and Improvement Report." April 1940. Unpublished report on file at The Montana Power Company, Property Accounting, Butte.

Renewable Technologies, Inc. "Holter Hydroelectric Facility." National Register of Historic Places Register Form." 1991.